

Revivals And Church History :: The Hope of Revival - David Butts

The Hope of Revival - David Butts - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2016/9/16 22:00

The Hope Of Revival
By Dave Butts

There is not much to see at the corner of Fulton, Williams and Ann Streets in New York City now. Just three blocks from the site of the former World Trade Center, there is nothing that identifies this intersection from any other unless, of course, you know its history.

About 158 years ago, God chose a small church at this intersection to begin a revival that swept through this nation and around the globe. Often known as the Third Great Awakening of the Layman's Prayer Revival, a prayer meeting on September 23, 1857, began a spiritual fire that brought more than one million people into the kingdom of Christ and saw sweeping cultural advances in spite of the Civil War being fought in the midst of it.

Perhaps it is more accurate to say that God chose a man, rather than a church. His name was Jeremiah Lanphier. Formerly a businessman, Lanphier became a lay missionary, focusing his efforts on New York City. In 1857, unemployment was a major problem, with 50,000 men idle in New York City alone. The nation was facing a most serious crisis with sectional divisions over slavery and economic policy. The power of the Second Great Awakening had waned in most places and the church seemed powerless to respond to the needs of the nation.

At this critical point in history came a man with a simple idea: gather businessmen at noon to pray for the city and nation. Lanphier put up posters around the Financial District of New York City and then went to pray on September 23 at the appointed noon hour. For twenty minutes, he prayed alone. Finally, five other men joined him. At the conclusion of the meeting, they encouraged him to do it again the next week. Twenty men joined in that following week. Within a few short weeks, thousands of businessmen and others were joining together to seek the face of God. The revival had begun!

It was not a revival that featured great preachers. Ordinary Christians gathered around the nation to pray, read Scripture, sing, and testify. The power of their changed lives began drawing their unbelieving friends and co-workers to the Lord. Transformed lives began to seek solutions to the issues that faced society.

Visiting that site on Fulton Street a few years ago, a fellow prayer leader joined me as we stood at that historic intersection where God manifested Himself 158 years ago and prayed that God would do it again in our day in New York City and around the globe. We walked and prayed and offered ourselves to the Lord as instruments in His hand. The Lord led us to pray Habakkuk 3:2 over that place and our nation: "Lord, I have heard of Your fame; I stand in awe of Your deeds, O Lord. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy."

Is there value in remembering a past move of God such as what happened on Fulton Street? The biblical record certainly appears to validate such an effort. Many times the Israelites were told to recall their history and find courage and hope in past events. In Isaiah 63, the prophet draws upon the life of Moses as he asks God why He is not acting in the same way in their day as in the days of Moses. The great prayer for revival in Isaiah 64 is based on a longing for God to return to Israel as He had been with them in the past.

Recounting the great acts of God in past revivals serves to stir the hearts of today's believers with hope toward such an awakening in our day. The act of remembering is not merely indicating an interest in spiritual history. It is a method, and a biblical one at that, by which we can create a longing within the church for a fresh encounter with the living God. Remembering past revivals can create opportunities for the hope for revival to enter into the awareness of the body of Christ.

Join in the Call

Would you join me in praying for a revival in the church that will exceed anything that has occurred in the past? Will you ask God to visit Fulton Street again and perhaps the street where you live as well? As you see how God has moved in history, will you pray with the Prophet Habakkuk: "Lord, I have heard of Your fame; I stand in awe of Your deeds, O Lord. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy?"

I have been privileged to work with many key Christian leaders across this nation and more than ever before, I hear the same cry coming from all of them: The only thing that can save this nation is revival! If you are serious about praying for the United States, one of the most important things you can do is pray for a great spiritual awakening in the nation.

The church is the key to the future of America. The nation does not believe that. We have been marginalized by culture. But not by God. As goes the church, so goes the nation. Of course, that is true in a negative way as well as a positive, and much of the illness in the nation is the result of a weak and powerless church.

“We fool ourselves to think that America can continue as the beacon of liberty and justice apart from the pursuit of the source of liberty and justice: God. But while it is all too easy to lay the blame elsewhere for the problems our nation is facing, the truth is that it is the church that must step up. We have become too satisfied with the status quo ‘doing little beyond simply stating our concerns. But complacency does not become a people in pursuit of God. The church in America is in need of another spiritual great awakening if our nation is to survive the onslaught against her very foundations. This is not hyperbole but reality. Our nation’s survival depends on the church’s awakening.” – Alex McCFarland, quoted in Charisma blog, January 6, 2015, “Impact of Great Awakenings in the Past”

What is this thing called revival? One way to describe it is a period of time in the life of the church when the manifest presence of God is experienced and lives are transformed in extraordinary ways.

Revival impacts the church or the individual Christian to begin to live the Christian life as God always intended. There is often a huge evangelistic result as Christians share their faith and as word of the revival spreads to unbelievers. A spiritual awakening is often used to describe revival that has spread beyond the church and is transforming the culture.

The United States has experienced a few Great Awakenings and a number of more regionalized revivals. Though not everyone agrees on the number, most would say there have been three Great Awakenings.... Each of these not only strengthened the church but brought significant changes into our culture.

Prayer Everywhere

What is it we are asking for as we pray for revival? Ultimately, it is for the people of God to begin to experience the presence of Christ in a fresh new way. All other results flow from that. Changed lives in the church as well as transformation in a culture come not from human effort, but the power of God made manifest in the lives of His people.

This isn’t about praying for a better life or that things would go smoothly for us. It is about God and His purposes being accomplished. The acknowledged leader of the First Great Awakening, Jonathan Edwards, was fired by his congregation in the midst of the revival. On a much larger scale, as the Third Great Awakening was taking place in the United States, the nation was dividing into North and South and war then tore the nation into pieces.

Some look to another great awakening in this nation as the solution to all of our problems. That would be wonderful but unlikely. It is more likely to take place in the midst of great difficulties and even persecution. If it is widespread and lasting, it may well slow or delay the judgment of God against our sinful nation.

More importantly, another great awakening can empower the church to finish the task of world evangelization. All past revivals have had tremendous evangelistic outreach, and I believe the one to come will as well. In addition, the repentance and humility that will be occurring in the body of Christ will be a key element in preparing the Bride for the Bridegroom. Revival in the church can bring a restoration of the New Testament purity, passion and holiness.

How do we pray for revival? Certainly Psalm 85:4-7 gives us a clear picture and we would do well to use this in our own prayers.

“Restore us again, O God our Savior, and put away Your displeasure toward us. Will You be angry with us forever? Will You prolong Your anger through all generations? Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You? Show us Your unfailing love, O Lord, and grant us Your salvation.”

One of my personal favorites in revival praying is found in Isaiah 63-64. It is a long passage of Scripture that speaks of Israel’s realization that they were missing the presence of God. They remember days in the past when that was not the case and cry out for God to come back to them. Taking this Old Testament passage and bringing it into New Testament realities is a powerful way of praying for revival. You will find yourself praying with Isaiah, “Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down!” (Isa. 64:1).

Adapted from With One Cry by David Butts. © 2016 by David Butts. Published by PrayerShop Publishing.

Re: The Hope of Revival - David Butts - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2016/9/17 6:32

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Re: The Hope of Revival - David Butts - posted by EAGLEFLYING (), on: 2016/9/18 19:06

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AMEN and AMEN we the church if MY PEOPLE... THAT IS US CHURCH.. SEEK HIS FACE AND TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS.. HE WILL FORGIVE HE WILL HEAL..

I PRAY WE ALL CAN LOOK AT OUR OWN HEARTS RUN THE RACE HE SET BEFORE US IN AND REPENT OF OUR WICKED WAYS.. CREATE IN US CLEAN HEARTS OH LORD FOR IF THERE IS INIQUITY IN OUR HEARTS YOU WILL NOT HEAR OUR PRAYERS... PS 66:18
MAY WE ALL HAVE CLEAN HANDS AND PURE HEARTS.. in JESUS NAME...